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FOUR MEN INDICTED ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

FRESNO—United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that four indictments were returned by a federal grand jury sitting in Fresno, California. The indictments, while unrelated, charge four men with various offenses involving use of the Internet and the sexual exploitation of minors.

The indictments were returned against WILLIAM TERRY EAKIN, 56, of Squaw Valley, California; ROBYN LEARNED aka ROBERT DANIEL LEARNED, 38, of Modesto, California; LANSING MAURICE LAURENDINE aka LANCE LAURENDINE, 52 of Fresno, California; and FELIX ARTHUR SANCHEZ, Jr, 26, of Fresno, California.

The indictment against EAKIN alleges that from June 9, 2004 through July 22, 2004, he used the Internet to attempt to persuade, induce, entice, and coerce a person that he believed to be a thirteen-year-old girl to engage in illegal sexual activity. The possible prison sentence for this offense ranges from a mandatory minimum of five years to a maximum of 30 years. This case was investigated by Detective Ken Hedrick of the Stanislaus County Sheriff's Department.

The indictments against LAURENDINE and LEARNED allege that each defendant used computers and the Internet to receive images of children that were being sexually exploited. The penalties for a conviction of this offense include a prison sentence that can range from a mandatory minimum of five years to a maximum of 20 years. The indictments against LAURENDINE and LEARNED also allege that each defendant knowingly possessed images of children that were being sexually exploited and that the images had been obtained using computers and the Internet. The penalties for a conviction of this offense include a possible ten-year prison term. Federal Bureau of Investigation agents from the Fresno, California office investigated the LAURENDINE case, and Federal Bureau of Investigation agents from the Modesto, California office investigated the LEARNED case.

The indictment against SANCHEZ alleges that he used a computer and the Internet to distribute images of children that were being sexually exploited. The penalties for a conviction of this offense include a prison sentence that can range from a mandatory minimum of five years to a maximum of 20 years. The indictment against SANCHEZ also alleges that the defendant knowingly possessed images of children that were being sexually exploited and that the images had been obtained using a computer and the Internet. The penalties for a conviction of this offense include a possible ten-year prison term. Special Agent Mike Prado of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) office in Fresno, California and Detective Kevin

Wiens with the Fresno County Sheriff's Department, Computer Crimes Investigation Unit investigated the SANCHEZ case.

"Prosecuting child pornography offenses is one of the highest priorities of the United States Attorney's Office," said United States Attorney Scott. "We will continue to vigorously pursue those who use the Internet to sexually exploit children whether the crime is communicating with children online for illicit purposes or distributing, receiving, or possessing images of child pornography."

These cases are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney David L. Gappa.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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